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RHMFISS/USCENTCOM POLITICAL ADVISOR MACDILL AFB FL IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 VILNIUS 000048

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [NATO](#) [AF](#) [LH](#)

SUBJECT: DEFENSE MINISTER ASKS FOR ASSISTANCE WITH
STRATEGIC MEETINGS, AFGHANISTAN

REF: A. 09 VILNIUS 569

[1](#)B. 09 VILNIUS 594

[1](#)C. 09 VILNIUS 607

[1](#)D. 09 VILNIUS 699

Classified By: Ambassador Anne E. Derse for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (U) ACTION REQUEST. See paragraph 5.

[1](#)2. (C) Summary: Defense Minister Juknevičienė on January 20 asked the Ambassador for USG assistance to provide air transport for President Grybauskaitė's planned visit to Afghanistan this spring. The DefMin hopes to meet with Secretary Gates during her upcoming visit to the U.S. She also discussed Ghor PRT staffing in Afghanistan, and the GOL's continued interest in building a special operations training center in Lithuania and supporting transit through Lithuania's Baltic port of Klaipėda to Afghanistan. The DefMin asked for our help to convince Denmark to maintain its troops in Ghor. End Summary.

[1](#)3. (C) The DefMin requested a meeting with Ambassador Derse to inquire about the possibility of the U.S. providing air transportation for President Grybauskaitė and herself for their visit to Afghanistan in late March or early April. She explained that the previous Ambassador had made this offer and she wants to know if it is still on the table.

[1](#)4. (C) The DefMin also provided an overview of her plans for the spring and asked for USG assistance on a number of issues:

-- The DefMin will visit Pennsylvania and Washington DC in April. She asked if it would be possible to meet with Secretary Gates during the trip and said that her schedule is flexible and could be changed to accommodate this meeting. While in Pennsylvania, the Minister will meet with PA National Guard to discuss plans for a POMLT in Ghor.

-- The Minister is also planning a trip to South Korea. She will meet the South Korean Defense Minister and may hold an unofficial meeting with the President as well to discuss opportunities to cooperate in Afghanistan on civilian projects. She mentioned that South Korea is planning to send 1,000 troops to Afghanistan.

-- The GOL will send 20 additional soldiers to Afghanistan to replace the 35 Croatians who will leave the Ghor PRT in May [1](#)2010. The DefMin said that the GOL is still willing to "share the flag" at the PRT. She added that MOD has approached several countries about providing additional troops but did not receive a positive response. She said that they have now "run out of time" and would backfill the mission themselves. The Minister also noted that Ukraine

plans to deploy an Explosive Ordnance Team (EOD) to Ghor province.

-- The Minister expressed her deep concern that Denmark will pull its soldiers out of the Ghor PRT. MOD Political Director Andrius Krivas elaborated that though there are only a few Danish officers in Ghor, their departure would mean the end of Western European representation at the PRT. MOD is concerned about how the Afghans will perceive a PRT staffed mainly by former Soviet states - Lithuania, Ukraine and Georgia. The DefMin asked for our help to convince Denmark to maintain its representation in Ghor.

-- The MOD remains interested in establishing a regional/international Training Center in Lithuania for Special Operations Forces. The GOL raised this with SOCEUR Commander Kisner during his December 16 visit. The GOL remains interested in discussing its concept further with the U.S. and would welcome a visit by US SOCEUR experts to do so.

-- The Minister inquired if we have any feedback on the GOL's proposal to provide a transit route to Afghanistan through the Lithuanian port of Klaipeda. Krivas mentioned that the NATO - Belarus transit agreement, which entered into force in January, brings new possibilities for transit through Lithuania but clarified that no practical arrangements have been made so far.

-- The DefMin expressed her gratitude for General Brady's leadership in the concept of operations for the Baltic States. She said that together with the Ramstein team, the

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three Baltic air forces are now working together to develop an air threat assessment.

-- We discussed the status of the MOU Concerning the Provision of Logistic Support for the U.S. Mission Personnel at the Lithuanian-led PRT and agreed to move forward with negotiations as quickly as possible. The Embassy will hold a DVC to facilitate this discussion between MOD and the U.S. team in Kabul.

-- The Minister confirmed that the GOL is happy with progress on contingency planning.

15. (C) ACTION REQUEST. We would appreciate DOS and DOD assistance to address the following action items from this meeting:

-- President Grybauskaitė will make her first trip to Afghanistan this spring. We strongly support her decision to visit Afghanistan and her request for air transportation for the trip. We are working with MOD to submit an initial request through NATO channels. If it is not possible to get NATO support we will ask DOD to consider the request. The gesture would demonstrate our strong partnership and our commitment to support the GOL's mission in Afghanistan during difficult economic times.

-- We also recommend that Secretary Gates meets with Minister Juknevičienė in April. Could DOD propose possible dates for the meeting?

-- Would SOCEUR be able to send a team to analyze the GOL's proposal for a SOF training center?

-- What should we advise the Minister is the USG's current thinking on using Lithuania's Baltic port of Klaipeda as a transit route for shipments to Afghanistan?

-- We hope that Embassy Copenhagen encourage the Danish government to stay in Ghor, and that DOD can deliver this message through military channels as well. If this is not an idea we should support, please advise.

DERSE